



# Delivering Care:

## 9 Ways to Optimize Your Healthcare Supply Chain Management



# Our Health Care Landscape Is Evolving

Back in 2015, industry watchdog Wait Time Alliance declared that “current demand for home care and long-term care is not being met and this gap will increase.” In response to this demand, healthcare supply chain management models needed to shift. Five years on, we’re in the midst of a global pandemic – and this statement has never been so relevant.

On top of this demand, Canada’s population is getting older, and in turn, more people are living with chronic conditions. While hospitals and other medical facilities have the most options and expertise to treat these conditions, many are now preferring to stay at home for treatment. This is likely due to innovative in-home testing devices gaining popularity and home administered treatments that have reduced the need for many traditional

doctor visits. In turn, the healthcare supply chain has been stretched beyond hospitals and clinics. During 2020, many people became less comfortable to visit hospitals, adhering to global mandates to “stay home” during the outbreak of COVID-19. With the current climate in mind, home healthcare solutions have become a top priority for patients and healthcare workers alike.

So how do you balance the increasing demand with the changes to our healthcare landscape?

One effective tool is a properly managed healthcare supply chain that is optimized for fluctuations.

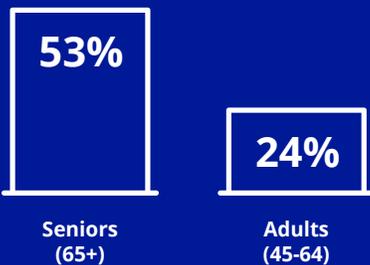


## An ageing population

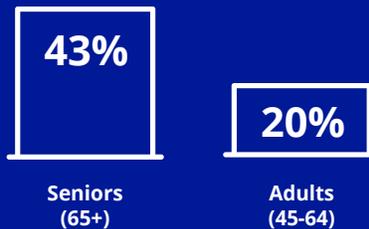
As we continue to live longer, the average age of Canadian citizens continues to rise too. In 2016, seniors outnumbered children in Canada for the first time ever. And by 2036, the number of seniors could reach between 9.9 and 10.9 million people accounting for about 23–25% of the overall population.

Seniors are much more likely to have one or more chronic health conditions than adults aged 45 to 64.

### Hypertension



### Arthritis



### Back Problems



## What Your Healthcare Supply Chain Should Accomplish

Whatever the size or scope of your organization, effective healthcare supply chain management involves a delivery partner that offers a range of solutions and specialized services, along with the expertise and technology that connect each step.

### Your partner should:

- ✔ Provide specialized handling
- ✔ Reduce transit time
- ✔ Guarantee delivery
- ✔ Offer flexibility & scalability
- ✔ Ensure visibility & tracking
- ✔ Maintain discretion
- ✔ Optimize cost-efficiencies
- ✔ Incorporate global sourcing
- ✔ Comply with regulations



## 1 Specialized Handling

As new generations of devices and techniques are developed, supply chains must evolve to properly deliver the technology.

[White-glove services](#), after-hours delivery and specialized handling protocols keep both products and people safe through the shipping of delicate or dangerous materials – not just to hospitals, but to patients' homes and long-term care facilities as well.

## 2 Reduced Transit Schemes

Stocking resources on-site isn't always possible, and timing is critical when it comes to medical products. Delays don't just raise costs; they can increase wait times and even risk patients' well-being.

Fast delivery requires familiarity with the "[last-mile of delivery](#)," whether it's a downtown core or a quiet neighbourhood. And positive relationships with the front desk or personal care professionals receiving the order can make a big difference.

## 3 Guaranteed Delivery

Your healthcare supply chain partner needs to be able to provide firm delivery dates – and stick to them. Missed deadlines can result in inadequate care.

This means coordinating with the tight schedules of clinic and hospital staff as well as the more fluid schedules of patients. And being on time is absolutely critical for those relying on home deliveries of medication.

“Canada has substantial capacity to support growth in the medical device industry and ... is an ideal home for a global medical device innovation hub.

Ivey Centre for Health Innovation and Leadership Report

## 4 Visibility & Tracking

The wide variation of health care product types creates intricate inventories, often spread across many locations. Without precise monitoring of inventory, inefficiencies happen. Your partner needs to respect confidentiality at every stage of the supply chain. Effective management of your healthcare supply chain should include visibility at every level: not just in detailed manifests but in shipment tracking tools for home care patients who want to stay informed.

## 5 Flexibility & Scalability

Just as manufacturers must be ready to rapidly increase inventory in an emergency, delivery solutions need to match demand. When a particularly bad flu season hits, your supply chain has to respond, so it should be able to re-prioritize easily.



## To vaccinate or not? During a pandemic vs. normal times.

Vaccinations have been proven to safely protect our society against many dangerous diseases – though some people are still hesitant about their safety and effectiveness. To protect Canadians at high-risk for influenza-related complications or hospitalizations, Canada’s goal is to have 80% of adults receiving vaccinations by 2025.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the health and wellbeing of our society and vaccinations seem a more prevalent topic than ever. But, will the public respond well to a vaccine? We looked back at the Swine Flu – declared a pandemic in 2009 – as a rough comparison.

### During a pandemic:

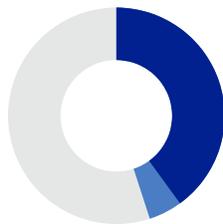
#### Year of vaccination

In mid-October 2009, Health Canada approved a vaccine for H1N1 influenza, followed by the largest vaccination campaign in Canadian history.

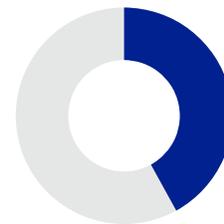
### In normal times:

Number of Canadians that received the 2018-2019 influenza vaccine during a normal season.

#### How many were vaccinated?



Between **40% and 45%** were vaccinated during the 2009 campaign



**42%** were vaccinated during the 2018-2019 season

#### More about the outcome...

Why so little during a declared pandemic? The most frequent reason was “did not think it was necessary,” cited by **74%** of those not vaccinated.



**74%** of those not vaccinated thought it unnecessary

The number of people getting vaccinated has been increasing during normal seasons:



**↑ 38%** vaccinated during 2017-2018 season  
**36%** vaccinated during 2016-2017 season



# \$250,000

An organization can face a fine of up to \$250,000 for violating the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

## 6 Discreet packaging

Privacy is critical, especially for home care providers. Non-descriptive packaging can ensure that medication or medical equipment remains unidentifiable until it reaches the patient or provider.

## 7 Cost-efficient without compromise

Canada's medical supply industry is highly competitive, and foreign websites such as Amazon and Alibaba are beginning to offer medical products at discount prices.

As a result, Canadian health care supply companies are under market pressure to reduce costs and find opportunities for the savings they – and their customers – need, without compromising quality or sacrificing on-time deliveries

## 8 Global Sourcing

With the majority of [medical devices](#) entering from outside our borders, an effective supply chain partner should understand and adhere to all customs requirements. Familiarity with the regulations of the countries of origin, especially the United States, can therefore be valuable.

Delays at the border can have a ripple effect across each step of the chain and are especially harmful to products that require special storage conditions.

## 9 Regulatory Compliance

Your healthcare supply chain partner must understand the range of [laws and regulations that govern the medical products](#) it stores, handles and transports, such as the Food and Drug Act, and remain compliant throughout each step. Medical devices are rated Class I–Class IV. Class I devices are low-risk products such as bandages, but the higher classifications require specific licences. An effective partner will understand which licences it is required to have and ensure it obtains them.



# 80%

of medical products are imported with about 44% being imported from the US.





## We're Ready for the New Normal

As you look for the right supply chain partner for your business, consider Purolator. We understand the Canadian healthcare market, and we're committed to delivering exceptional service. We designed our supply chain for the future realities of the healthcare industry, and your current day-to-day needs. Our cost-effective solutions cover every aspect of your day-to-day needs, including [import and border-clearance management](#), warehousing, transportation and returns processing.

The demands of healthcare are constantly fluctuating, so our services are always able to scale beyond your average requirements. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we've leveraged our vast network to deliver over 8 million respirators and 24 million pieces of personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves and gowns – and we're still going strong. We're also delivering COVID-19 testing kits and diagnostic equipment to hospitals to help the federal government accelerate its testing goals.



## Let's talk about how we can support you.

Optimize your healthcare supply chain with expert logistic solutions from Purolator.

Contact us

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